



Idaho 44 Corridor Preservation Study Summary of Middleton Workshop August 22, 2007



Idaho 44 Corridor Preservation Study Summary of Middleton Workshop Participant Comments

August 2007

The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) and the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) are working together to identify future transportation needs along the Idaho 44 corridor from Interstate 84 to Eagle Road.

As a result of the study the following documents will be produced:

- A regional vision for the highway
- An implementation plan
- An access management plan
- An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- An analysis of a Middleton Alternate Route

Middleton Workshop Process

In August 2007, the study team conducted a public workshop for residents of the City of Middleton and key stakeholders.

To notify for the workshop, COMPASS and ITD sent a letter to every resident and business in the city of Middleton and to the project database (4,388). In addition, COMPASS and ITD placed a display ad in the Middleton Gazette's August edition and placed a notice of the workshop on their Web sites.

Representatives from COMPASS, ITD and the public involvement consultant team conducted the workshop. It took place on Aug. 22, 2007 at the First United Methodist Church, located in downtown Middleton.

Over 150 participants signed in and picked up information packets placed on chairs. The packets contained:

- Idaho 44 brochure
- Moving Idaho brochure
- PowerPoint presentation
- "Frequently Asked Question's" from the May 2006 public meeting
- *Communities in Motion: Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan 2030* Executive Summary
- COMPASS brochure

- Post-it notes and marker

Sue Sullivan, ITD project manager, opened the workshop with a presentation about the study. Gwen Smith, ITD public involvement coordinator, provided instructions for participating in the workshop.

The purpose of the workshop was to get community feedback on the following questions:

1. Do you support an alternate route for the city of Middleton? *(Yes, No, Undecided, Concerns)*
2. Do you support the alternate route identified in the Middleton Comprehensive Plan? If no, please draw your recommended route on the map provided.
3. What are the environmental issues in the project areas that need to be considered?
4. What questions do you have?

Workshop Summary

COMPASS and ITD received the following written responses to each question. The transcribed comments are attached.

1. Do you support an alternate route for the city of Middleton?

Of the 117 responses to this question, 107 were in favor of an alternate route, one was not in favor, and eight were undecided.

Following are commonly heard comments from those in favor of an alternate route:

- Get it done as soon as possible.
- Move it south of the existing corridor.
- Yes, but I am concerned about taking wildlife habitats and farmland.
- Yes, but with access control.
- Yes, but not on Purple Sage Road.
- Yes, use Willis/Goodson/Purple Sage Road as alternate route.
- The future traffic assessment is not good for the middle school and high school located on the existing corridor.

Following are commonly heard comments from those undecided about an alternate route:

- I need more information.
- I am new to Middleton.

2. Do you support the alternate route identified in the Middleton Comprehensive Plan? If no, please draw a line on the map provided.

A total of 92 participants answered yes to this question, 26 answered no and seven were undecided.

Following are commonly heard comments from those who said support the alternate route identified in the Middleton Comprehensive Plan:

- Yes, in that general area.
- Yes, as long as it is not too close to the river or on Purple Sage Road.
- Yes, if the plan includes proper noise barriers for the corridor.
- Build it similarly to the Idaho 44 bypass in the city of Eagle.

Following are commonly heard comments from those who do not support the alternate route identified in the Middleton Comprehensive Plan:

- Move it farther south.
- It's too close to the river.
- The bypass should connect back up at Emmett Road.
- It will impact me as property owner.
- I am concerned about the impacts on the environment.

Commonly heard from those who were undecided was:

- I need more information than the map provides.

3. What are the environmental issues in the project areas that need to be addressed?

Of the 67 responses to this question, 30 indicated that there are no environmental issues, 15 did not know of any environmental issues and 24 indicated that there are environmental issues.

From those who said there are environmental issues:

- There are a floodplain and wetlands in the area.
- There will be noise issues.
- There is a lot of wildlife in the area.
- There are artesian springs in the area.

4. What questions do you have?

Participants raised many questions:

- What measures will be taken to buffer the noise impact to surrounding property owners?
- If landowners are displaced by the project, will they be adequately compensated so that they can purchase another home or property?
- Can the bypass be connected to Emmett Road?
- Will Emmett Road be extended as part of the Middleton Comprehensive Plan alternate route?

- Are traffic signals planned for Idaho 44 at major intersections such as Duff Lane, Lansing Lane and Middleton Road?
- What will happen where the four-lane corridor drops back on to Idaho 44 just past Canyon Lane? Will that roadway be widened to I-84?
- What will the intersection at Middleton Road look like?
- How many intersections will be along the bypass?
- Is there any other road that will connect with the bypass road?
- Will the corridors for Idaho 44 and U.S. 20/26 be prioritized in front of Idaho 16 extension to Interstate 84?
- Can U.S. 20/26 be made into four lanes with a divider?
- Will Idaho 44 eventually be widened all the way to Boise?
- With an alternate route, why can't Idaho 44 remain a two-lane corridor?
- Is U.S. 20/26 still being considered for an expressway? That could take some pressure off Idaho 44.
- Does ITD own the ground between the existing fences on U.S. 20/26 and Idaho 44?
- The Middleton School District has plans to build a new high school at the intersection of Emmett and Willis roads. Has this been considered in the western start of the bypass?
- How will the new high school at the intersection of Emmett and Willis roads impact traffic and access to the bypass?
- People want to put a greenbelt on the north side of the river. Why not put a greenbelt along the alternate route all the way to Caldwell?
- Where will traffic generated from the northern platting be routed?
- Will there be bike lanes?
- Why can't the alternate route be farther south beyond the river?
- With the West Nile Virus problem, why would anyone worry about filling wetlands?
- Can sales tax be increased by 2-4 percent to fund these road projects?
- Can the route be kept for local traffic only?
- If we are at the point of trying to identify an alternate route in 2007, was the time and money spent to date wasted?